

WASHINGTON, DC – Legislation passed the US House of Representatives today commending the outstanding efforts of State Department, United States Agency for International Development, and U.S. armed forces personnel for their timely and compassionate response to the earthquake and tsunami of December 26, 2004. House Resolution 120, sponsored by Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D – Ore), recognizes the hard work of these individuals whose selfless acts were instrumental in the response and recovery process.

“The civilian employees of the State Department and USAID and our men and women in uniform went beyond the call of duty in responding to the tsunami,” Blumenauer said. “Their professionalism, skill, creativity, and commitment saved lives and was an important step for peace and security in this world.”

Blumenauer said he was inspired to introduce this legislation after he witnessed firsthand the quality of the relief effort being conducted in that region. In early January, Blumenauer went on a week-long fact finding mission with other members of the House International Relations Subcommittee on Asia to survey damage from December’s devastating tsunami. During this trip, Blumenauer visited with survivors, international aid workers, and government officials in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia so that he could better understand the relief efforts that were underway.

Upon returning from his trip, Blumenauer testified along with Congressman Jim Leach (R – Iowa) to the full House International Relations Committee, reporting that his observations confirmed his belief in the value of these important relief efforts.

“Having seen the difference that officials for the State Department and USAID, working together with our military, are making to the survivors of the tsunami,” Blumenauer said, “highlights for me the need to continue to enhance our diplomatic, development and humanitarian capabilities. In order to do that, we must make sure that Congress provides the resources they need.”